The Unitarian Calendar

God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly
What he has given;
They live on earth in thought and deed, as truly
As in his heaven.

— John G. Whittier.

Vol. 4 APRIL — 1912 No. 8

OUR NATIONAL SOCIETIES

With headquarters in the building of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Local offices at 104 East 20th Street, New York City; 105 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill., and 376 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Cal.

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1825.

The chief missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes books, tracts, and devotional works.

Address correspondence to the Secretary Rev. Lewis G. Wilson.

Address contributions to the Treasurer, Hon. George Hutchinson.

UNITARIAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY

Founded in 1827.

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Address correspondence to the President, Rev. William I. Lawrance.

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Promotes the local organization of the women of the Unitarian churches for missionary and denominational work.

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELIGIOUS UNION

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Promotes the organization of the young people of the Unitarian churches for "Truth, Worship, and Service."

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The Unitarian Calendar

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THE RELIGION OF THE AGES

REV. MARION FRANKLIN HAM

Of the Christian Union Society, Reading, Mass.

The Unitarian faith is as old as literature. Its roots run deep down into the sub-soil of race childhood. It was the first faith-song upon the lips of the child-man. A thousand years before Abraham drove his flocks out of Haran into the land of Canaan, a Hindoo poet sang this song about God:

"There is one living and true God,
Everlasting, infinite in power, and wisdom, and goodness;
The Maker and Preserver of all things;
Self-existent, pure, perfect, omniscient, omnipresent;
He is spirit, without form;
No vision can approach Him;
No language can describe Him;
No intellectual power comprehend Him."

There is the Unitarian concept of God as one Power expressed in a Vedic hymn five thousand years before John Harvard thought of founding a college. A Hindoo poet sings thus in the early dawn of history:

"That all-pervading Spirit
Which gives light to the visible Sun;
Even the same in kind am I."

There is the Unitarian concept of the oneness of God and man expressed in the Rig Veda before a word of our Bible was written. Consider

this expression: "The way to eternal beatitude is open to him who without intermission speaketh the truth." There is the Unitarian passion for abstract truth and uncompromising sincerity. I quote again, a description of Brahm:

"I am the sacrifice, I am the worship, I am the prayer;
I am the father and the mother of the world;
I am the creator and the comforter,
The journey, the resting place, the friend;
I am the seed of nature, the sun and the rain;
I am the soul in the body of all beings;
I am the beginning, the middle, the end;
I am birth, and life, and resurrection;
Among worships I am the silent worship;
Of all knowledge I am wisdom;
They that serve other gods unconsciously worship Me;
I am the receiver of all worship, and the reward of all worshippers."

There is the Unitarian concept, (and also the final conclusion of science) of life as one power, one energy, one creative source and principle. So we find in these Vedic hymns the Unitarian concept of God and human life chanted by an Indian poet, while yet the world was in swaddling clothes.

Men speak of the Unitarian movement as a new heresy. Its principles and its message are as old as the thought of man.

When one hath once sinned, against knowledge, he is troubled awhile, and this he taketh for true repentance; and when he is grown into some hope that the first sin is forgiven him, he is the bolder to venture on the like again; and thinketh that the second may as well be forgiven as the first. —*Richard Baxter.*

"WHAT SHALL WE DO TODAY?"

REV. ALFRED W. BIRKS

Of Unity Church, Natick, Mass.

Every Sunday morning this question is asked in thousands of Protestant homes, and the proportion who decide wisely and well is very small. The majority sleep late, eat too heartily, read until their eyes ache and their heads become dull, and possibly get out for a little exercise and fresh air. The day's cessation from work is a mere parody on the intent, and while Monday finds the brain sluggish, its promise of activity is a decided relief. The minority go to church. They eat, sleep, golf, motor, read, just like the majority. but they also go to church. Their minister may be brilliant or stupid, their church hot or cold, the air good or bad, the music inspiring or otherwise, but you will always find them in their pews on Sunday morning. From the professions, from business, from the shops, from the homes they come, men and women, young and old, and one thing is noticeable above all others—there is not a finer, more capable, alert, or honest set of people in all the world. This is not said in disparagement of the non-attendants, nor does it lose sight of the fact that black sheep are occasionally found in the churches. A comparison shows conclusively that, other things being equal, the church-goer is much better off than the stay-at-home. This rule will even stand the test of the saying that there are many good people outside of the churches. Bless your heart, of course there are; but just think how much better they would be standing, not alone, but with the church behind them!

The foolish follow after vanity; deluded men!
While the wise guard earnestness as their richest treasure. —*Dhamma-pada.*

THE JUSTICE OF THE UNIVERSE

REV. F. A. POWELL

Of the First Unitarian Society, Helena, Mont.

The true grounds of a genuine optimism are the justice of the universe as a whole. Let us once be assured of the sanity and integrity of the universe and all our local and incidental ills will be forgotten, "as Alps and Andees are lost in the circle of the sphere."

If intelligence, and love, and law reign throughout infinite time and space, then all the tides, and currents, and pulses of power in the universe are flowing in the direction of right, of justice, and ultimate harmony.

If, however, we live in a universe of chance and accident, of luck and lawlessness and favoritism, then we have no assurance that even wisdom can find the way of safety, or virtue the path of peace.

The Gospel of Good Cheer is one of comprehensive vision, of spiritual insight, of cloudless hopes. It says, "God your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." It announces the justice of the universe, the goodness of God, the sanity and precision of the world-order. It proclaims the omnipresence of Love, and Wisdom and Power; and says that the way to gain is to give, the way to enjoy the good you have is to be grateful, the way to be triumphantly happy is to be helpful.

In man's backsliding into positive sin, the judgment doth reason more remissly than it did before, and the will doth oppose it with less resolution, and with greater faintness and indifferency.

—*Richard Baxter.*

THE USES OF FAILURE

Defeat is a stern schoolmaster to teach us the value, of patience and proper equipment. The curriculum of the school is hard and the discipline severe, but no man can win success in life without thorough mastery of its lessons.

All men strive and fail, but wise men find in their failures the causes that led to defeat and use this knowledge to build more securely the structure of ultimate success. Thus all great victories are won by a wise utilization of knowledge gained in many defeats, and all worthy achievement rests, like the superstructure of a beautiful building, upon the hidden foundation of innumerable failures.

If we would win success we must first learn to make wise use of that knowledge which comes to us in the experience called failure.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

THEODORE PARKER

Here on earth, everything in its place and time matures. The acorn and the chestnut, things natural to this climate, ripen every year. A longer season would make them no better nor bigger. It is so with our body; that, under proper conditions, becomes mature. It is so with all the things of the earth. But man is not fully grown as the acorn and the chestnut, never gets mature. Take the best man and the greatest—all his faculties are not developed, fully grown, and matured. He is not complete in the qualities of a man; nay, often half his qualities lie all unused. Shall we conclude these are never to obtain development and do their work? The analogy of nature tells us that man, the new-born plant, is but removed by death to another soil, where he shall grow complete and become mature.

TWO OPPOSING TYPES OF MIND DEAL WITH THE BIBLE

REV. GEORGE A. THAYER

Of the Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The one who calls himself the conservative insists that there shall be no abatement of the ancient, long-standing awe with which every verse and book was viewed. It is God's book, and what God writes is perfect.

The other, who calls himself a radical, cries, "Away with the whole spirit of reverence for the Collection! It has blood upon it! It has bred murder and hatred betwixt man and man! It is used as a fetich for the shelter of gross superstitions and for the prevention of clear and honest thought!"

The wise scholar finds a middle ground to be much more helpful to human blessing. To blot out the Collection would be to impoverish all culture, not alone of faith, but of morality, literature and art.

But this adherent excellence is independent of the names of writers or their age and country. If a collection is from God for man, it must bear the reasonable tests by which all instruments of human good must be tried. If it will not bear the light of intelligent inquiry, it cannot be from the God who made man a rational being.

What, then, is that which is able to conduct a man?

It consists in keeping the spirit within free from violence and unharmed, superior to pains and pleasures, doing nothing without a purpose, nor yet falsely and with hypocrisy, not feeling the need of another man's doing or not doing anything. —*M. Aurelius.*

RESURRECTION

During this month of April the greatest possibility associated with our beliefs about human life will be brought to the attention of the Christian world, "If a man die, shall he live again?" This is the enigma of the ages. The possibility that the question, in the very nature of things, involves an affirmative answer is of such consequence that the world will assume that a negative answer is preposterous. The world as a whole, whatever individuals may think, will not tolerate a denial of immortality.

Within the bounds of the Christian church it will be affirmed that the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb, is a proof of continued existence so well established that reasonable people should require no other. Indeed, many of the older Unitarians insisted that to doubt the resurrection of Jesus was to surrender Christianity itself.

One needs only to read the Gospel narratives carefully, however, to see how insecure is the foundation upon which the dogma of the resurrection of Jesus is based. These accounts are involved in hopeless variations and contradictions. They differ

1. As to the number of women who visited the tomb on the first day of the week.
2. As to the number of persons in white raiment who appeared to the women.
3. As to the words spoken by the reported apparitions.
4. As to what the women did.
5. As to the persons to whom Jesus is said to have appeared after His death.

The accounts are known to contain accretions of later authorship than the original manuscripts, and even some of those who were reported as present among the scenes depicted "doubted." Among the early Christians themselves there were almost hopeless differences of

opinion as to the reality of what afterwards developed into the most significant doctrine of the Christian church.

There was a time when these considerations were of vast importance, but among liberal thinkers of the modern world they have little weight. If Jesus *as God* rose bodily and ascended into heaven, that ascension of deity would argue nothing in favor of human beings who are mortal. But, if by any means a human being was known to enter into another conscious existence after being put to death, then he was simply following a course common to all human beings.

Out of all these illusions and guesses and superstitions that have been associated with the founder of Christianity, there emerges one vital and indisputable fact, viz., that it was not, after all, the death of Jesus, nor anything that may have occurred to him after his death, that bears directly upon the welfare of the world today, but the *life* he lived when he moved among men. Scarcely had he disappeared from mortal view than his very enemies began to recognize his spiritual greatness and exclaim, "Surely this man was a son of God." Scarcely had the sun risen on the morrow than people who had been spiritually blind began to see that life was something different from the house of clay in which it had been confined.

Life itself acquired new value as soon as Jesus had demonstrated what is was capable of being and doing. And the divinity that he manifested, his followers soon saw they could manifest, enabling them to be consciously one with God, even as he had been one with Him. He had convinced his age that life itself was something too transcendent to fade with the body into dust, and it is because we share with him in this conviction that Easter comes to us with all its great good cheer and its assurances of endless resurrection.

L. G. W.

UNITARIAN HYMN

On eyes that watch through sorrow's night,
  On aching hearts and worn,
Rise thou with healing in thy light,
  O happy Easter morn!

The dead earth wakes beneath thy rays,
  The tender grasses spring;
The woods put on their robes of praise,
  And flowers are blossoming.

O shine within the spirit's skies,
  Till, in thy kindling glow,
From out the buried memories
  Immortal hopes shall grow:

Till from the seed oft sown in grief,
  And wet with bitter tears,
Our faith shall bind the harvest sheaf
  Of the eternal years.

Frederick L. Hosmer.

EASTER THOUGHTS

REV. GEORGE R. GEBAUER

Of the First Unitarian Church of Duluth, Minn.

Easter time is full of deep and sweet religious intimations. It draws us close to that Elder Brother, who first realized "how near is God to man." It is the season when the soul rejoices and gladly joins in the chorus of faith, which hails the "risen Christ." For while we may fully realize how inadequate, after all, is the Resurrection story, there comes to our soul an inward truth of the dear legend. It is the truth of poetry, the most real of all above time and place. The story of the open grave is but a divine allegory,

whatever the actual occurrence, which is past finding out. That poem of the first Easter morning tells the eternal truth, that "life is ever Lord of death," that the Christ in me and in you can not suffer corruption, that the God-man in you and in me is waiting for his glorious rising. What matter if the son of Mary actually rose from the sepulchre or no, the truth remains the same to him who has learned from the master the deep verity of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Indeed, he who knows himself the child of God, and lives in his spirit, shares in the risen, in the transcendent life of the Master. For such the Son of Man need not die on the cross and need not bodily arise from the grave to assure him of God's love and justice. He knows the higher truth, that man must ever atone for himself on the cross of repentance; he knows that he must daily die in order to live, that he must bury his lower self, so that his higher manhood may arise out of the grave. To him who celebrates Easter in this spirit of love and devotion to the Master, in loyalty to the truth which can not die, Christ is risen indeed.

THE PRESENT TEST

REV. ARTHUR L. WEATHERLY

Of All Souls' Church, Lincoln, Neb.

The test of a life today is the capacity for fellowship. "Fellowship is heaven, and the lack of it, hell." A man's life is measured by the width of his sympathies. The noblest of the race are "perfect, even as God is perfect" in that they sweep into the immeasurable depths of their souls the whole of the human race. Not one escapes. The low, the mean, the cruel, as well as the noble,

good and true, are subjects of their sympathies, are objects of their good-will, "Nothing that pertains to man is foreign to me," said the Latin poet. And the man of universal outlook adds that "No man is foreign to me."

This is the foundation of a universal religion. The paths to the higher life are many. But the guiding star is the same for all the searchers of these paths. We can not see eye to eye, or catch the brightness of the same rays. But we can cheer one another across the intervening spaces. We can have a sense of a common pursuit. To have this it is necessary to develop a sense of fellowship that is inclusive of all. A Hindu incarnation of God said he could not return to heaven so long as one remained outside. And we can not enter the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth so long as we shut out from the realm of our sympathy and good will even one human creature. The breadth of our sympathies is thus the test of our life, of its divinity and its power.

The sect shuts men off from other men. The dogma shuts men off from God. It affirms it has the truth, and thus deafens the ear of man to the last whisper of the Eternal. The sect is founded on dogma. Dogma and sect must be forever thrust aside before men and women can enter into the fulness of life. To support a sect is to put up barriers between yourself and other men, between yourself and the future; to aid other men in doing so is to line up with the reactionary forces. This course shuts men off from the higher sources of inspiration.

The modern cry is for "all or none," not in some far-off realm called Heaven, but "Here and Now." Your ability to hear and respond to this cry is the test God places on you this day.

Save me from that fatal bondage which human presumption is not ashamed to call liberty.

—*Fenelon.*

OUR DEFINITE PURPOSE

REV. C. E. ST. JOHN

Of the First Unitarian Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

In the published note-books of Matthew Arnold the following quotations from A Kempis appears frequently: "Always place a definite purpose before thee." This might well be accepted as a leading motto for all who hope to achieve anything in the world. At any rate, it is the principle which should underlie moral earnestness. Every church, for instance, should with great clearness know exactly what it is trying to do with human souls and keep that purpose ever strong and keen. Every working minister finds it helpful to call himself to account at frequent intervals with the question, What is it that I am trying to accomplish, and to what extent is this particular act or sermon likely to further that end?

What, indeed, is the Unitarian church trying to accomplish at the present time? To our mind our purpose is to impart to as many persons as we can influence a religious basis to their lives; that is to say, we are trying to bring it about that any one who has received any influence from the Unitarian Church shall be of a cheerful disposition, shall face life with undaunted hopefulness, shall respect his own faculties and possibilities inasmuch as he is a child of God, shall believe devoutly in the real presence of God in the world as an unfailing power which affects each individual life for good, and withal shall take up each daily duty with the feeling that life is wondrously worth while, and that even the drudgery of it can be continually blessed by the conviction that through drudgery, as through joy, we are laying the foundations of an eternal life. Others may define religious motives differently. Let each man rejoice in his own definition, but let him have

one, distinct and grand, and then let him hold his life work up to the level of that definition.

For the church that intelligently follows out a purpose like this it is necessary to have every function conducted with reference to the furtherance of the purpose. In the Sunday School we are trying to do what we do in the church; that is to say, the Sunday School is a failure if it does not inspire its children to accept the religious motive as the power of their young lives. The parish social gathering is to be judged as to its worth in the same way. If it helps to carry out the fundamental purpose, it is commendable. If it does not, it is a waste of everybody's time. So of the charitable expenditure of the church's funds. If they are administered with mere caution and intelligence, but without love, they are nothing. Again, any Sunday on which the preaching or the worshipping do not distinctly tend to the cultivation of these deep things of the spirit, time has been wasted for the children of God, and the effect will be shown in a diminished congregation on the following Sundays. But, wherever the great purpose is made to shine Sunday by Sunday, the throngs of people who gladly submit themselves to the sway of so noble an influence are bound to increase.

THE RATIONAL METHOD IN RELIGION

REV. J. H. CROOKER, D.D.

When we call to our aid the facts of nature, poured in rich tides of illumination at our feet by scientific investigations, then our hearts shed all the old fears and superstitions and beat to the rhythm of a greater joy and a nobler worship. When we trace afar, through the fields of his-

tory, the wondrous fruitage of the God-consciousness in symbol, psalm and philosophy,—the witness in the child of the parental life and love,—then there rises before us a more glorious thought, not of "It," but, translating ourselves upward we dare to affirm, of Him who filleth all in all.

When we look within ourselves and contemplate the deep rootage of the soul, following the evolution of the human spirit from cosmic mist to rational mind, and realize that the sublime consummation and supreme meaning of this creativeness is MAN,—a nature organized, tutored and enriched by the forces of the universe that are the providences of God, a being whose life momentarily flows to him out of the Infinite Life,—then we affirm these great truths of an Everlasting Gospel, disclosed to all who will stand upon this mount of vision:—The sonship of humanity, rather than the sonship of one individual; an ever-unfolding revelation through the experiences of brain and heart, rather than a closed statute of law or a finished form of dogma; a universal and natural appropriation of the Divine Life, rather than a limited and sacrificial atonement.

And, listening at this inward Sinai, we hear, in clear and jubilant tones from out the depths and heights within us, where Father and son perpetually flow together, the convincing and consoling declaration of our immortality. A message so spoken by Him who made us, and He is just, shall remove all doubts and give peace in all troubles.

The rational method of religious thought is, then, a fearless and confident appeal to life in all its historic records and personal experiences, with perfect faith that the free reason will find authoritative truths and that the unbound heart will furnish adequate and noble motives for con-

duct and character. It is a method which protects individual sanctities of opinion, while urging all to growth of soul and growth by service, and it utilizes the accumulations of the past with one hand, while with the other it opens the doors of discovery. It is a continuous resort to the soul itself—to find in its native trusts the witnesses of the Divine Presence, and to affirm with gladsome accents the deep-rooted and far-spreading conviction that our love flows down into us from an Infinite Love that shepherds all souls, and that rejoices most over us when we bend in love over our brother in need.

He who aims high must dread an easy home and popular manners. Heaven sometimes hedges a rare character about with ungainliness and odium, as the burr that protects the fruit.

—*Emerson.*

NOTES

An extremely interesting series of vesper services for 1911-12, beginning Dec. 3d and ending March 10th, was prepared by Rev. Alfred R. Hussey of the Baltimore church. At these meetings short addresses were given on such subjects as "The Servant in the House," "The Melting Pot," "The Dawn of a Tomorrow," "The Return of Peter Grimm," "The Piper," "The Bluebird," "The Great Divide," "The Easiest Way," "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," etc.

In spite of far below zero weather during January and February, the Unitarian Church at Duluth has been very much alive during the last three months. A series of interesting concerts and lectures was given. Mr. Gebauer has given

a series of lectures upon the Faust Legends as they appear and reappear, both in German and English literature.

The Third Religious Society of Dorchester publishes an extended Year Book, covering all the enterprises of the church and containing a series of services for fellowship, communion, christening, and young people's service.

The Roslindale Branch of the Alliance held a series of meetings during the winter, at which the following subjects were presented: "Illustrated Talk on the Olympic Games," by Mr. J. Leonard Mason; "The Social Settlement Work of Boston," by Mr. Robert A. Woods; "A Discussion of the Negro Problem," by Miss Maria L. Baldwin; "Unitarianism in the Northwest," by Rev. Lewis G. Wilson; "Eugene Field in Poetry and Song," "Illustrated Lecture on Birds," by Mrs. Harriet T. Boyd.

In March, Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D. D., President of the American Unitarian Association, visited a number of places in the South, giving special attention to various new enterprises in North Carolina and Florida.

The Secretary, Rev. Lewis G. Wilson, started on Feb. 27th for the Rocky Mountain region, where he inspected a number of churches and then visited the new movement at San Antonio, Texas, stopping on his way home at New Orleans for the installation of the Rev. George Kent.

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